



Guide's Guide

Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Location Summary

Directions: East on Doane Road, one mile from Salt Pond Visitor Center (on road to Coast Guard Beach). Look for brown and white picnic area sign.

Safety: Obey posted speed limits. Be especially careful of bicyclists and walkers along roadway. Watch out for ticks and poison ivy.

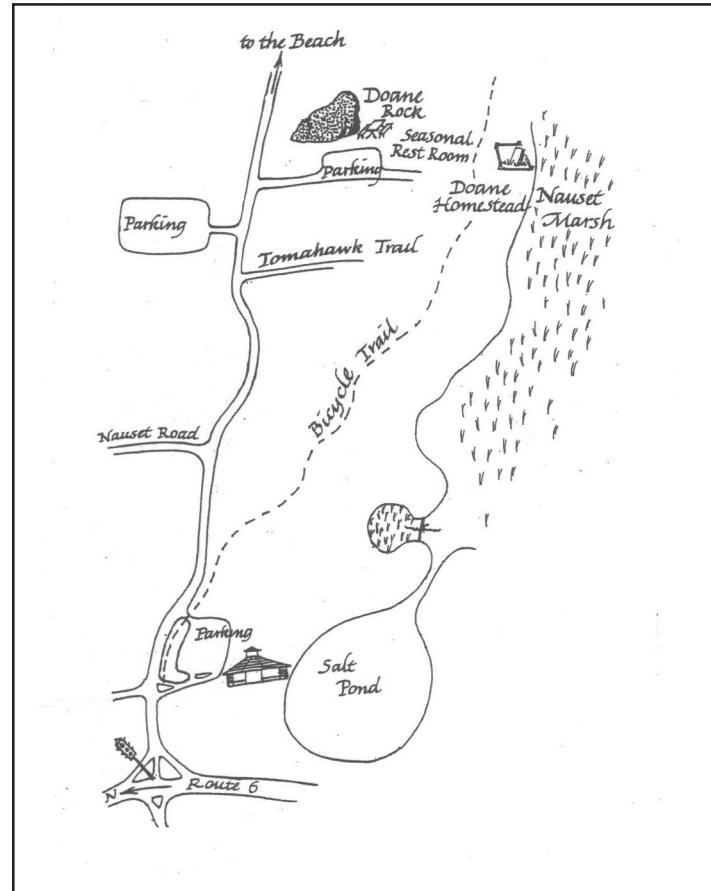
Other: Seasonal restrooms and paved wheelchair accessible loop trail at Doane picnic area.

Tips: Doane Rock, the largest glacial boulder exposed on Cape Cod, can be seen from the main roadway to the right. Here, private homes border the roadway, a unique feature of the make-up of Cape Cod National Seashore. This is also a good location to park and walk to Coast Guard Beach. (Be aware, however, of posted parking time limits here.)

Time Frame: Five-minute narration time on board bus. Fifteen to 25 minutes needed if stop made to see Doane Rock or memorial.

Notes for Educators: The Doane area features Doane Rock, the premier example of a glacial “erratic” boulder (transported by ice), as well as the Doane homestead site.

Highlights: Doane Rock
Paved wheelchair accessible loop trail
Picnic area and seasonal restroom
Doane homesite memorial



Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Prominent Natural Features

Doane Rock is the largest exposed glacial boulder on Cape Cod. It is accessible by a short pathway from the area's first parking lot. The rock and glacial forces that moved it are explained in an on-site wayside exhibit panel.

The Doane Loop Trail is a paved, wheelchair accessible trail that meanders through the emerging pine-oak forest. Other trails in the vicinity lead to Salt Pond Visitor Center and to Coast Guard Beach. A mixture of upland vegetation includes concentrations of bearberry, bayberry and beach plum.

Walking trails to Coast Guard Beach. (Caution: Walk only on designated shoulder portions when trails adjoin Nauset bicycle trail. Stay in single file, off pavement.)



Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Touring Script

Doane Rock protrudes above the otherwise level ground surface of the Eastham plain. This glacial boulder attests to the massive scale of the glacial ice sheets that covered Cape Cod some 18,000 years ago. Boulders of varying sizes were transported from their original location as the great ice sheet, sometimes up to two miles thick, crept slowly southward. Doane Rock is the largest exposed boulder on Cape Cod.

Over time, the landscape here has seen many changes. When the glaciers retreated, northern vegetative types predominated. Then, as the climate warmed, more southern species arrived. The landscape contained a mix of both types until the arrival of Europeans, who dramatically altered the scene.

Deacon John Doane was one of the first of seven families from Plymouth Colony to settle in this area in 1644. A memorial stone was erected some two hundred years later by Doane family members. Doane was a prominent member of the Pilgrim Church, and took on a number of leadership roles in the Plymouth Colony's government. Doane descendants are still prominent on Cape Cod. Some Cape Cod Doanes also resettled in Nova Scotia at the time of the Revolutionary War.

In Deacon Doane's days, the land was rich and fertile, but English land clearing and farming practices exhausted the soil, leading to a barren landscape. In the mid-1800s, Doane Rock (also known as Enoch's rock), stood starkly above a treeless horizon.

Freeze on Development

Gradually, the landscape recovered, and a pitch pine and oak woodland became established on top of the sandy soil. Houses, too, began to spring up in the 1950s, and it was soon realized that the quaint remoteness of old Cape Cod was quickly becoming a thing of the past. One of the motives behind the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore was to freeze development. A unique arrangement called for towns to set zoning standards to restrict future building within the Seashore's boundaries, while also allowing (in most cases) for pre-1959 structures to remain in private ownership. Thus, the homes that occasionally dot the roadways within the Seashore boundary are, in themselves, a part of the preserved landscape, allowed to be bought and sold privately, but not intruding on the scene of Cape Cod beyond the area's appearance prior to 1959.

Today, Cape Cod National Seashore is one of over 360 units of the National Park Service, which started with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. It is interesting to note that in the late 1860s Lt. Gustavus Doane, a direct descendant of Deacon John Doane, headed the government expedition into the Yellowstone region that led to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, the nation's first, in 1872.

Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Deacon John Doane

On September 10, 1869, the Doane family of Eastham and adjoining towns held a meeting at the place where once stood the residence of Deacon John Doane, one of the seven first settlers of the town. The purpose was to witness the erection of the granite stone seen there today. The inscription on the stone reads:

Dea.
John Doane
Born, 1590
Here, 1644
Died, 1685



Henry David Thoreau was also sufficiently impressed by the legacy of John Doane that he commented on him in his writings about Cape Cod in the mid 1800's. Thoreau's sources were based on legend, and stray somewhat from fact. But his account accurately defines this "New England Saint's" character. Thoreau states:

One of the first settlers of Eastham was Deacon John Doane, who died in 1707, aged one hundred and ten. Tradition says that he was rocked in a cradle several of his last years. That, certainly, was not an Achillean life. His mother must have let him slip when she dipped him in the liquor which was to make him invulnerable, and he went in, heels and all. Some of the stone-bounds to his farm which he set up are standing to-day, with his initials cut in them.

A Founder of Eastham

Doane did not live as long as Thoreau attributes, but, indeed, was a most prominent figure in the Pilgrim Church and Colony, and a premiere founder of Eastham. Historian Josiah Paine of Harwich says that John Doane was the eldest of Eastham's seven first settlers, and was undoubtedly next in rank to Governor Prence. These two (Prence and Doane) he wrote, were the only persons of that band whom the records of that period honor with the prefix of Mister ... given only to men of means, magistrates and ministers.

The date John Doane came to Plymouth is not known, according to Paine. Pratt, Eastham's most prominent historian, says that Doane came over in one of the first three ships, but Paine questions this, pointing out that Doane came over sometime between 1630 and 1633. In more recent studies, historian Eugene Stratton also concludes that Doane arrived at Plymouth sometime between 1627 and 1634.

Doane accumulated much land in Plymouth and Eastham. Paine states that the Deacon did not come to Eastham until 1645, not 1644, as the marker states. However, Stratton notes that Doane was one of the men appointed to buy land at Nauset [from the natives] ... and became one of the first settlers there.

John Doane's life was long and useful—he held many offices in town and colony. He was appointed as a deacon of the church as early as 1634. He also served as one of seven assistants to the governor, was given tax assessment responsibilities, and was appointed to serve on several special committees to make recommendations regarding laws, wages and rates for goods. Doane was nearly 84 years of age when he retired from the town board of selectmen. He was called on as moderator in numerous disputes.

John Doane was known to be somewhat tenacious, and although a prominent figure in the church, not above the use of civil litigation to his own advantage. There is an account of his suing the widow Ellen Billington in 1636 for slander. The widow was subsequently sentenced to pay Mr. Doane five pounds, and to sit in the stocks and be whipped. He was also licensed to sell wine in 1639, and appears to have been involved in several other business activities.

Deacon John Doane *continued*

Doane's earliest known wife was Ann, and later records show him as being married to Lydia. His children included Abigail, John, Daniel, and Ephraim. According to Pratt, the Deacon owned at least 200 acres of land in this vicinity. Pratt, like Thoreau, stated that Doane was around 110 years old when he died. Paine and Stratton attribute the Deacon with a somewhat more modest life span. Doane was probably about 96 when he died, still a ripe old age by any standard.

There are many descendants of this remarkable man. From his three sons have descended the Doanes of the Cape and widely scattered areas in the United States and Canada. As a visitor stands at the Doane marker, surrounded by the Cape Cod National Seashore, it is interesting to recall that a young second lieutenant, Gustavus C. Doane, wrote such a classic report of accuracy on and admiration for the Yellowstone area that his report was beyond doubt the leading factor in the creation of our first National Park, Yellowstone, in 1872.

Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Why a National Seashore?

Although since 1872 Congress has been steadily adding wilderness areas and historical sites to the National Park System, it was, as recently as 1954, short on shoreline scenery. Only 240 miles of the 3,700-mile coastline between Canada and Mexico were set aside by either a state or federal government for preservation and public recreational use. (Three national park areas—Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina, Everglades National Park in Florida, and Acadia National Park in Maine—were included in this 240 mile area, but occupied little more than half of it.) When in 1954 a survey was made as to which shoreline sites would be most suitable for the National Park System, the Great Beach at Cape Cod, between Chatham and Provincetown, was placed at the top of the list.

With its forty miles of unbroken beach backed by spectacular dunes, this was scenery which deserved to be both protected and shared with all Americans. Certainly, the history of Cape Cod, which springs from the very heart of the American story, deserves to be known and preserved. In every way, the Cape Cod shoreline met the requirements for a national park: a place whose scenery and whose natural and historic resources should be conserved for the enjoyment, not only of people today, but for people in the future. And beachfront property was becoming scarce. It was important that the land be set aside soon.

43,557 Acres

Fortunately, it was not too late to save the Great Beach of Cape Cod. On August 7, 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed the Cape Cod National Seashore Bill. (He used 22 pens so he could give them away as souvenirs to those who were at the signing.) From then on, 43,557 acres of the Outer Cape would be under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone.

Certainly, the land has benefitted from becoming part of the National Seashore. Forests which were cut down by colonists for firewood have begun to come back. And certainly the American people benefit from the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore. There are more than five million visits to the Seashore each year. People admire the spectacular ocean views, and enjoy the long stretches of unspoiled beach. No matter the number of visitors, there is an opportunity to feel a sense of solitude with nature. In the spring, visitors may observe tern nesting grounds, watch warblers in migration, or greet ducks and geese as they arrive from the south. Occasionally, a visitor may spot an eagle or an osprey.

Rangers at the National Seashore offer programs and informational material to help visitors appreciate the history and natural environment of the Cape.

Doane Rock and Doane Memorial

Cape Cod National Seashore Land Ownership

“Where is the park?” first-time visitors to Cape Cod National Seashore often ask. When a Park Ranger replies, “You’re in the middle of it,” the visitor asks, “Then what are all these houses doing here?”

These questions result from the pioneering approach Congress took when it authorized Cape Cod National Seashore. This approach necessitated agreements and concessions among federal, state and local governments as well as private landowners. Most of these groups shared the belief that the Seashore’s wooded hillsides, dunes, marshes and forty miles of undeveloped beach were worthy of preservation. However, Cape Cod land had been occupied and owned almost since the day Europeans first arrived in North America. So, most asked, “How can preservation be accomplished?”

In the early days of the National Park Service, the process was initiated by the government’s claim of mostly unoccupied western land. Parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite resulted from this approach. Today, parks are often carved out of heavily-settled and privately-owned land. Achieving preservation now usually begins with the acquisition of land through transfer from other federal agencies, donation, purchase, or occasionally, condemnation. In the case of Cape Cod, the National Park Service used all of these contemporary methods, plus a uniquely different one. When it authorized Cape Cod National Seashore, Congress declared that homes constructed prior to September 1, 1959, considered to be “improved property,” could always remain in private ownership, subject to specific guidelines. Through this legislative avenue, nonfederal land within the boundaries of the National Seashore could be managed according to standards set forth by the Department of Interior, and homes that had been in families for generations could remain so.

Unraveling and connecting these disjointed parcels of land to create the National Seashore was costly and time consuming, yet, most would agree, worthwhile.

A Patchwork Quilt

Today, the National Seashore is like a patchwork quilt with its edges at the authorized boundary. Within this boundary lie about 43,557 acres (one acre equals about 3/4 of a football field). The National Seashore presently holds title to 27,000 acres of this land, and will purchase 400 acres in the near future. Another 350 acres are protected by Park ownership of scenic easement. The five Outer Cape towns and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts own another 14,500 acres. The remaining 1,200 acres consist of improved properties that may always remain in private ownership.

Town-owned property consists mainly of roads, ponds, and recreational beaches. The town of Wellfleet, for example, retains ownership of four beaches within the National Seashore and sets the fee for their use. Title to most of the oceanside beach, however, is held by the National Seashore. Property under jurisdiction of the Commonwealth consists primarily of submerged land lying within the Seashore’s quarter-mile offshore boundary.

Private improved property owners may sell their land or pass it on as an inheritance. Expansion and renovation of existing structures is allowed as long as it is done in compliance with local zoning and building codes. Construction cannot be for commercial purposes.

At present, approximately six hundred parcels of improved property remain privately owned within the boundaries of the National Seashore. Most of this land lies in the towns of Eastham, Wellfleet and Truro. Among these is one dune shack in the Province Lands.

Cape Cod National Seashore Land Ownership *continued*

Some additional developed parcels of land exist, but are not considered improved property because their structures were built after September 1, 1959. While these additional developed properties belong to the National Seashore (a portion of the 27,000 acres), the original owners may use or occupy them until a date agreed upon at the time of purchase. This use and occupancy “reservation” is either for up to 25 years, or for the lifetime of the titleholder listed on the Deed of Record. Most of this property will be turned over to National Seashore administration before the year 2000.

Commercial development does exist within the boundaries of the Seashore, but only on a limited basis. Ten certificates for commercial use have been issued to owners whose business operations preceded the authorization of the Seashore. These certificates are issued for a specific use and period of time.

Breakdown of Land Ownership

National Seashore	27,052 acres
Scenic easement held by Seashore	346 acres
Private Land (improved property)	1,610 acres
Public (state, town, other federal)	14,561 acres